



# PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION OCCASIONAL PAPERS 2018/19

The **Public Administration Occasional Papers 2018/19** are synopses of research reports and organisational assessments conducted by the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) to facilitate knowledge-building and improved practices towards establishing a more efficient, effective and innovative public service in South Africa.

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# OVERVIEW

## Transforming the Public Service into a highly productive machinery

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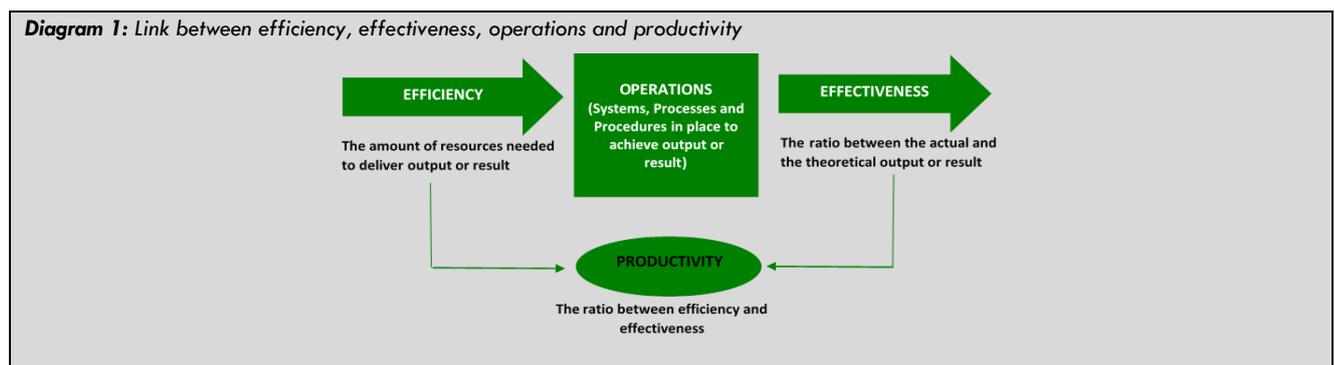
Achieving a high degree of productivity is an important objective of public service organisations across the world given that they are under increasing economic and political pressure to deliver quality public goods and services within the context of ever-increasing resource constraints. The South African public service is no exception to this global phenomenon. This reality, together with the constitutional imperative that public administration should promote the efficient, economical and effective use of resources, has necessitated the DPSA to develop and implement two specific policy frameworks to ensure that all public service organisations are capable of achieving a high level of organisational productivity. These two frameworks, the *Public Service Productivity Management Framework (PMF)* and the *Operations Management Framework (OMF)*, are conjointly aimed at guiding public service organisations towards improved efficiency, effectiveness and operations (systems, processes and procedures) that would ultimately yield greater improvements in service delivery to citizens and other public services recipients.

*Organisational efficiency* is determined by the amount of time, money, and energy – i.e. the human and financial resources – necessary to obtain specified outputs or results (deliverables). In order to meet organisational deliverables, specific resources have to be allocated. If, for example, organisations are able to meet their deliverables with fewer allocated resources, they have operated more efficiently.

*Organisational effectiveness* is determined by comparing what the organisation should deliver (given the allocated resources) in relation to what it actually delivers. If an organisation is successful in delivering more outputs or results (at the same quality standard) in the same time period, organisational effectiveness has increased. *Public service organisational productivity (PSoP)* is defined as the ratio of the deliverables achieved (effectiveness level) and the resources invested to achieve the deliverables (efficiency level).

$$\text{PSoP} = \text{Effectiveness}/\text{Efficiency}$$

In other words, if an organisation can achieve more deliverables (outputs and targets) with fewer resources (human and financial), organisational productivity has increased. Key to ensuring a high level of organisational productivity is improved operations; i.e. the systems, processes and procedures the organisation has put in place to ensure that invested resources are translated into quality deliverables. Diagram 1 shows the relationship between efficiency, effectiveness, operations and organisational productivity; indicating that public service organisations can become more productive through improved operations management.



The DPSA Public Service PMF (2016) seeks to equip public service officials with a complete and practical understanding, definition, and measurement tool for organisational productivity. This measurement tool enables public service officials to assess organisational productivity in terms of three core factors, namely: Labour, Operations, and Performance.

To date, the productivity measurement tool has been piloted in seven (7) government departments and documented as case studies to facilitate learning and knowledge-sharing about the possibilities and practices of measuring public service productivity. These case studies, that has been developed over a 3-year period, shows that the objective measurement of public service organisational productivity is practically feasible and, if applied methodically, it can lead to the improved management of identified efficiency and effectiveness deficits provided that the data used for productivity measurement is beyond reproach in terms of quality and relevance.

To ensure that public service organisations are better equipped to measure organisational productivity and that more departments participate in the measurement of productivity, the study recommends that government departments should improve the quality of their administrative datasets; and that such datasets should be available online, as required by section 31(2) of the 2016 Public Service Regulations. Also, departments that are committed to improving organisational productivity are encouraged to implement the OMF as per section 36 of the Public Service Regulations (2016). This Framework provides a step-by-step guide to public service officials on the execution of their operational responsibilities for purposes of improved organisational efficiency and effectiveness. The OMF obligates public service organisations to put the following operations management '*building blocks*' in place, namely: an organisational service delivery model, business processes, standard operating procedures, a service charter, and service delivery standards. A 2016 assessment of 107 national and provincial government departments however showed that despite these organisations having adequate internal capacity to implement the operations management '*building blocks*', the status of implementation was fairly low. Altogether 63% of the 107 departments assessed in 2016 have not institutionalised the operations management '*building blocks*', which means that they are not geared for improved organisational efficiency and effectiveness as envisaged in section 10 of the constitution. This is a serious concern given that 81% of the 107 departments indicated that they do in fact have the required internal capacity to implement the OMF. To address this implementation deficit, and to ensure that all public service organisations are geared to be more productive, the DPSA will intensify its advocacy initiatives related to both the PMF and OMF.

Through its legislative mandate, evidence-informed policies and guidelines, and direct support to public service organisations the DPSA is certainly leading the public service in the march towards higher productivity. A consequence of this leading role in transforming the public service into a highly productive machinery is that the South African public will benefit directly through greater improvements in service delivery.

# THE HABITS OF HIGHLY PRODUCTIVE PUBLIC MANAGERS

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## ABSTRACT

This article explains the link between the habits of individual public managers and organisational productivity, arguing that public managers need to develop specific behavioural patterns if they want to advance productivity in the public service.

**Keywords:** Public service productivity, public managers, efficiency, effectiveness, habits

## INTRODUCTION

In his seminal book, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, author and management guru, Dr Stephen Covey, identified a set of principles that may be used in general life and in the workplace to help people to grow, change, and become more effective in almost every area of human responsibility. In truth, the Seven Habits became a management blueprint for personal development when it was published in 1989. With organisational productivity emerging as a key management focal area in the South African public service over the past decade, it is perhaps opportune to determine the equivalent habits of highly productive public managers that can guide this category of public official in their duty to lead the public service to higher productivity.

The link between the habits of individual managers and organisational productivity has been well-proven through empirical research. For example, in 2008, Peer-Olaf Siebers, a computer science professor at the University of Nottingham, lead an extensive multi-disciplinary study on the role of management practices in enhancing productivity which found that the behaviour of individual managers play a crucial role in advancing organisational productivity.

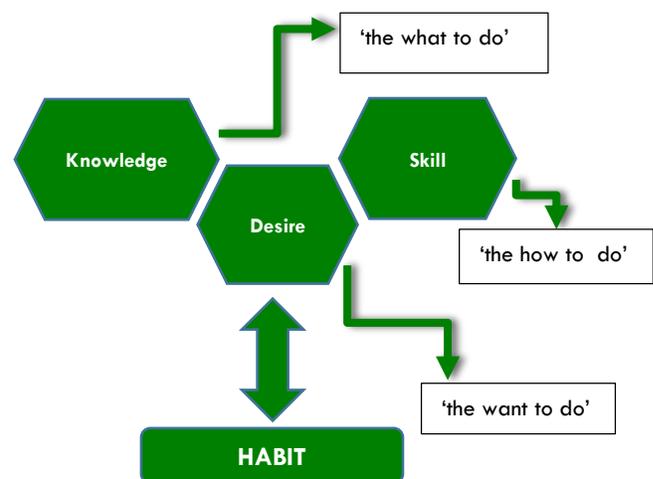
## THE NATURE OF HABITS

For Covey, a habit is an 'unswerving behavioural pattern' or a 'consistent way of being and doing' that is developed through

knowledge, skill, and desire simultaneously. He explains that knowledge is the theoretical paradigm, the 'what to do' and the 'why'. Skill is the 'how to do'. And desire is the motivation, the 'want to do'. Habits are thus developed or learned through work in all three dimensions (see Box 1).

These three dimensions are also instrumental in unlearning or breaking deeply embedded habits and replacing them with others. It requires new knowledge and skills, and especially the desire for change. And once change has been achieved, it also requires commitment not to fall back on 'the old ways of being and doing'.

### Box 1: Diagram 1: Dimensions of creating a 'habit'



## THE PRODUCTIVE PUBLIC MANAGER

In the public service, managers are considered to be highly productive when they succeed in converting inputs (labour, finances, and infrastructure) into high quality outputs (goods and services) in the most efficient (lowest cost and least time) and effective (right quality and quantity) manner, whilst upholding the right of the output beneficiaries (citizens) to participate in deciding on the output standard.

## KEY HABITS OF PRODUCTIVE PUBLIC MANAGERS

The habits of highly productive public servants mentioned in this article were identified through a review and analysis of literature on public management best practices, individual productivity improvement techniques, and the generic traits of effective and efficient public managers. These habits therefore go beyond the normal or generic requirements for 'good public management practice'. For example, sound planning is a prerequisite in 'standard/traditional' public management practices and effective service delivery, but the habit of also using the planning process as an empowerment tool (see *Habit 5*) would set 'highly productive' public managers apart from the 'good/traditional' ones. Here are the key habits of highly productive public managers identified for everyday practice:

### **Habit 1: Strive to understand your position within the greater scheme of the Public Service**

Continually empower yourself by updating your knowledge of the macro organisation of the State, the constitution (chapters 2 and 10 in particular), the priorities of government and the felt needs of the beneficiaries of your service delivery function. And use this knowledge to locate your specific roles and responsibilities within this broad scheme of things. Being highly productive does not mean you must have the solutions to all the challenges faced by the total public administration system. Accept the limitations of your own knowledge and skills and value the knowledge, skills and potential of your colleagues at all post levels in the organisation including that of service delivery beneficiaries. Tap deep into these diverse skills and knowledge sources

through continuous dialogue and consultation. You may be surprised to learn how much your colleagues and service beneficiaries know about your area of work and possible solutions to work-related problems. Simply put, internalise the values and principles of courtesy and consultation as embodied in the ethos of *Batho Pele* and make them an integral and practical part your daily service delivery duties.

### **Habit 2: Know the nature and cost of your key inputs and outputs**

All inputs or resources used to achieve work-related outputs (goods and services) must be quantified and accounted for. Know the cost of your labour and that of your entire unit. Ensure that this labour is put to productive use through appropriate goal-setting and time management. Physical resources used in the service delivery function – whether it is stationary, IT equipment, or any other 'tools of trade' – must be quantified and accounted for. Keep track of the quantities and cost of inputs used to deliver outputs. And strive to either reduce these inputs used to deliver the same quantity and quality of goods and services; or endeavour to keep the inputs used constant whilst increasing the quantity and quality of goods and services delivered. The ability to measure and account for inputs (labour, finances, materials and infrastructure) used to deliver a unit of output to the citizen at the expected quality and quantity is the hallmark of a highly productive public manager.

### **Habit 3: Build and maintain partnerships in- and outside the Public Service**

Develop and nurture inter-organisational and cross-organisational partnerships for higher productivity. Conceptually, a partnership is an extended form of group dynamics where two or more parties establish relationships and leverage resources to work together with an expectation that each of the parties would achieve a greater goal than working individually. In South Africa, the notion and benefit of cross-sectional partnerships for sustainable public administration is underscored by government's call that by "*working together, we can do more*". At a practical level, and

to the benefit of higher productivity, this means that by 'working together' partners can deliver greater outputs as they leverage their time and resources, experience and expertise, and knowledge and skills to work together complementarily. These types of partnerships, built on clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and mutual respect is what highly productive public managers build their success on.

#### **Habit 4: Be the change you want to see in the total public administration system**

Highly productive managers spend little time preaching the virtues of efficiency and effectiveness in the workplace. They allow their actions to speak for itself. Good time management, including punctuality at meetings and adhering to set deadlines, are well-known habits of highly productive public managers. Being organised, prioritising important projects and tasks and completing them before beginning another, is also a key practice of productive managers. Being clear and consistent in the messages that are communicated to people in the organisation is a further important habit of productive managers. Communicate your roles and responsibilities clearly, and, where appropriate, consistently let others know *what* is expected of them, by *when*, *why* and what the expected standard of delivery is in terms of both quantity and quality. Also, saying 'no' when appropriate is an important productivity skill. If you are always available then people will take up all your time. And if you give all of your time away, you will not have any left to get to your key priorities. In essence, highly productive public managers lead the way to higher productivity by communicating, through their actions, the changes they want to shape in the entire public administration system – greater organisational efficiency and effectiveness for the benefit of the citizen.

#### **Habit 5: Use planning as empowerment tools**

It is a generally accepted management principle that 'good managers' plan their work effectively. Highly productive

managers, on the other hand, 'go the extra mile' by using management planning processes to empower others by encouraging *maximum* participation in planning through the creation of a conducive environment for participatory planning; and by teaching participants practical leadership skills and skills in strategic thinking, consensus decision-making, and the art of public speaking and presentation. By empowering planning stakeholders on how to listen, engage, lead and conduct themselves in a participatory planning space, highly productive public service managers are contributing directly, and without additional resources, towards the development of a professional public service and a public administration system capable of delivering services and products that meet the needs and standards of the most valued entity in the total public administration system, the citizen.

## **CONCLUSION**

In summary, highly productive public managers:

- Understand their position within the greater public service;
- Know the nature and cost of all work-related inputs and outputs;
- Actively build and maintain partnerships in- and outside the public service;
- Have mastered the art of being the change they want to see in the total public administration system;
- Use management planning processes as empowerment tools.

These five practices, if consistently applied by managers, can lead the South African public service machinery to higher productivity.

# THE NEXUS BETWEEN PRODUCTIVITY AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF BATHO PELE STANDARDS

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## ABSTRACT

The nexus between government's Batho Pele policy and the quest for higher public service productivity is inferred in policy and practice since 1997. But how well is the Batho Pele policy, and specifically Batho Pele standards developed and implemented in public service departments? This article unpacks the extent to which Batho Pele standards are developed in government departments and examines the perceptions of public service officials with regard to the implementation of such standards.

**Keywords:** Public service productivity, Batho Pele standards, service delivery improvement.

## INTRODUCTION

Representing the inner core of the *White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery*, Batho Pele ('People First') was adopted in 1997 as the framework to establish a new service delivery ethic in the public sector in line with South Africa's constitutional ideals for public administration, which includes advancing a high level of organisational productivity vis-a-vis the efficient, economic and effective use of public resources (Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996, s195(1)(b)). From the onset of this approach, the productivity imperative was clear in that Batho Pele (BP) required public service delivery officials to "strive for excellence" in executing their public mandates and to "commit to continuous service delivery improvement" (DPSA, 1997: 8). Also, the operational embeddedness of BP and the quest for a high level of public service organisational productivity, was never at issue in the public sector as these agendas had to be "embraced as an integral part of all management activities to ensure that every management process is aimed at improved service delivery and customer satisfaction" (DPSA, 1997: 9).

The transformative philosophy that underpins the BP policy and the objectives of public sector organisational productivity are thus integrally linked since 1997. This nexus necessitates a deeper understanding of the degree to which the BP policy, and in particular BP standards, are internalised and implemented in departments because a systematic adherence to such standards indicates a high propensity for overall organisational productivity. By using the Limpopo province's Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs (Coghsta) as a case study, this paper examines the perceptions of public service officials with regards to the implementation of BP standards in that department. As such, this study provides a first systematic log of public service delivery officials' appraisal of BP standards working out in practice.

## MOVING FROM PRINCIPLES TO STANDARDS, THE BATHO PELE JOURNEY

The first fifteen years (1997-2012) of implementing the BP policy focused largely on promoting and monitoring public sector compliance with implementing this transformative policy framework. Between 2005 and 2009, a total of

eight studies were undertaken by the Public Service Commission (PSC) to monitor such compliance. These studies highlighted the public service's "... failure to implement the Batho Pele principles" due to "...a lack of skills, the absence of ...standards and a general failure to link Batho Pele with organisational strategy" (own emphasis) (Parliamentary Monitoring Group, 2007). It was only in 2012 that the PSC conducted a comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of the BP policy in improving public service delivery. This Report on the Assessment of the Effectiveness of the Batho Pele Policy in Public Service Delivery (PSC, 2012) was timeous and well-accepted within the public sector and specifically the Public Service and Administration Portfolio Committee. Yet, it had a crucial shortcoming in that it focused solely on the implementation of BP principles by public service departments, with no reference whatsoever to the importance of developing, and adhering to, the implementation of a fixed set of agreed to BP standards. From an accountability perspective, which is a key dimension of effective service delivery, the distinction between BP principles and standards are crucial given that standards are specific, measurable, and agreed to by the users of the standard; whereas principles are not. Principles are merely general guides on how to act in a given context or situation. At best, therefore, the BP principles only guide public service officials in terms of their behaviour when executing their public service delivery functions. The 2012 PSC evaluation report therefore incorrectly recommends a number of 'indicators' (i.e. measures) that can be used to assess the implementation of BP principles in departments. These 'indicators' (see Box 1) are, in fact, mere guidelines or "...values that describe a desired attitude to service delivery..." – they are not standards (DPSA, 1997: 103). Standards, on the other hand, are much more definitive than principles in that they are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound (DPSA 1997: 105). And as valuable as the dominant focus on promoting and monitoring public sector compliance with implementing BP principles has been, the time has arrived for the public sector to move towards developing measures for the implementation of BP standards that correlates to the

measurement of overall organisational productivity. This study is therefore timeous as it provides a first systematic log of the setting of BP standards by a department and public service delivery officials' appraisal of the implementation thereof in practice.

## RESEARCH BACKGROUND, APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

**Background:** In 2015, Coghsta (Limpopo province) developed a context-specific set of minimum standards for the implementation of each of the eight (8) Batho Pele (BP) principles. This initiative was undertaken after the PSC published its 2012 evaluation report on the effectiveness of the BP policy in improving public service delivery. This report recommended a set of specific 'performance indicators' that departments should use when measuring the implementation of Batho Pele principles (PSC, 2012: 144-145). Box 1 contains a summary of these 'indicators'.

Box 1: 'Indicators' Recommended by PSC, 2012	
BP Principle	'Indicator'/Guide
<b>Consultation</b>	Regularly conduct meetings with service users to identify their service needs and provide them with an opportunity to give feedback on the quality of services rendered.
<b>Service standards</b>	Service standards are displayed at all service points and reflect the needs of service users.
<b>Access</b>	Increase the number of service points and report on the rationale for such changes.
<b>Information</b>	Monitor what information is provided through which means to service users.
<b>Courtesy</b>	Monitor on a regular basis how frontline officials treat service users.
<b>Openness and Transparency</b>	Provide 'Annual Reports to Citizens' to inform service users about the management of departments with regard to: Who is in charge; departmental service standards; service delivery improvement plans; organisational structure; and department budget plans.
<b>Redress</b>	Regularly report on service users' complaints and how these were addressed.
<b>Value for Money</b>	Monitor on a regular basis whether services offered are in line with service users' needs.

The PSC's recommended 'performance indicators' prompted Coghsta to develop its own minimum standards against which to measure the implementation of the BP

policy. Through an internal participatory process, Coghsta identified a standard for each of the eight Batho Pele principles (See Box 2):

'strongly agree', 'agree', 'neutral', 'disagree', or 'strongly disagree' with each statement (see Box 2).

Box 2: Batho Pele Principles, Standards and Statements		
PRINCIPLE	STANDARD	STATEMENT
<b>1. Consultation</b>	10 % of all service recipients should be consulted about the quality, cost and timing of the departmental specific services they receive at least once a year.	The department consult service recipients about the quality, cost and timing of departmental specific services that are provided.
<b>2. Service Standards</b>	Service recipients should be told what quality of departmental specific services they will receive through the publication of a service charter that is reviewed annually.	The department is providing basic services that are of a good quality.
<b>3. Access</b>	All service recipients should have equal access to the departmental specific services on an ongoing basis.	The department is making progress in ensuring that everyone has equal access to services.
<b>4. Courtesy</b>	All service recipients should be treated with courtesy and consideration 100% of the time	The department always treats all service recipients with respect.
<b>5. Information</b>	Service recipients should be given full, accurate information about the public services they are entitled to receive on a continuous basis.	The department provides service recipients with good information about the public services they are entitled to receive.
<b>6. Openness and transparency</b>	Service recipients should be told how departments are run, how much they cost, and who is in charge through an annual report to citizens.	The department provides service recipients with regular information on its performance in delivering services to service recipients.
<b>7. Redress</b>	If the promised standard of service is not delivered, service beneficiaries should be offered an apology, a full explanation and a speedy and effective remedy; within 30 working days.	The department responds quickly to complaints about problems regarding services and communicates its responses to problems to service recipients.
<b>8. Value for money</b>	Public services should be provided economically and efficiently in order to give service recipients the best possible value for money.	Service recipients are getting good value for the money they are charged for basic services

**Approach:** Questionnaires combined with selected focus group discussions were the primary data collection methods of this study. These questionnaires captured the views of Coghsta officials regarding the implementation of Batho Pele standards against a set of specific positive statements (see Box 2).

The statements were crafted through a participatory process within the Goghsta Batho Pele Change Management Directorate and the Directorate Organisational Design. Participants were asked to respond to these positive statements relating to the implementation of each Batho Pele standard by ticking whether they

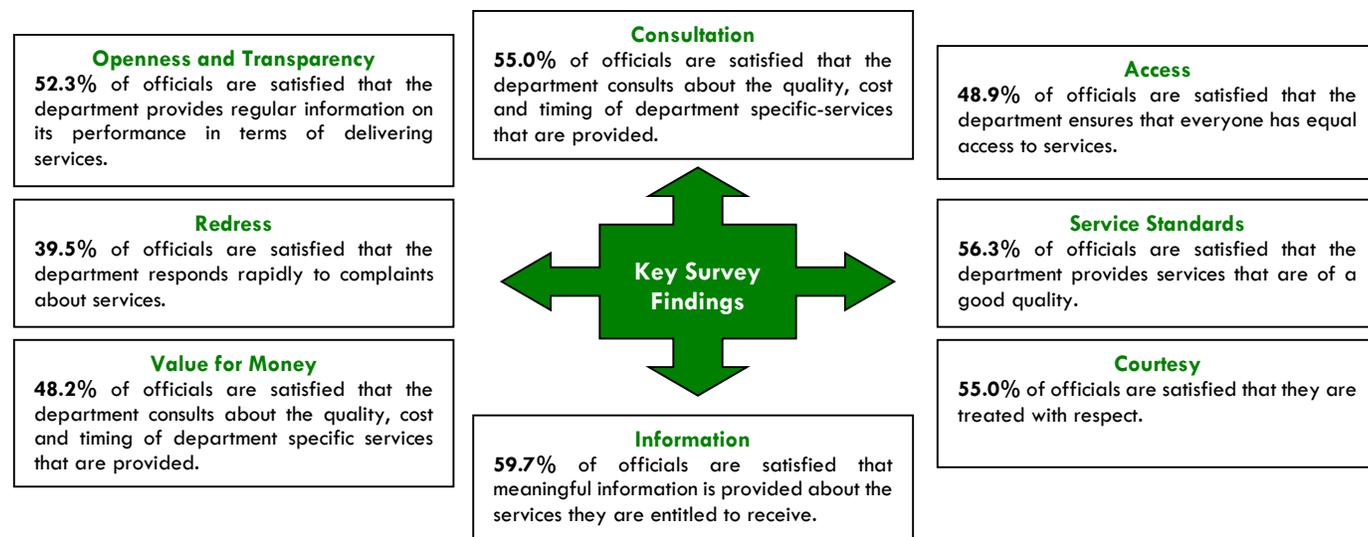
**Methodology:** The study is qualitative and deductive in that it is based on a questionnaire survey that draws on participant observation supplemented by focus group discussions with selected groups of participants. Coghsta has a total of 2038 officials categorised according to post-levels 1-8 (Support staff), 9-12 (Middle management), and 13-16 (Senior Management). An electronic questionnaire was sent to officials with access to e-mail. Focus group discussions were held with officials that have no or limited access to e-mail facilities. These officials include Community Development Workers (CDWs) who are public servants working mainly in the municipal wards where they live (see Davids & Cloete, 2010), and officials based in rural traditional councils. During focus group sessions officials

were given the opportunity to complete the questionnaire manually. A total of 620 officials completed the questionnaire, representing an overall response rate of 30%. Responses per post-level were as follows: post-level 1-8 (523 responses), post-level 9-12 (85 responses), post-level 13-16 (12 responses). Data capturing and analysis were undertaken by officials from the Directorate Organisational Design and verified by the DPSA.

### IMPLEMENTATION OF BP STANDARDS: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The overall findings of the study are summarised in Box 3. The study indicates that more than 50% of participants were of the opinion that Coghsta is generally performing well in adhering to five (5) of the eight standards set for the implementation of BP. Less than 50% of participants were of the opinion that Coghsta is performing well in adhering to the set standards for Access, Value for Money and Redress.

#### Box 3: Key Findings of Coghsta Survey, 2017



The study also indicates that there are differences in how participants at varying post-levels perceive the implementation of BP standards in practice (see Box 4). The greatest disagreements with the positive statements between post-levels are between the post-level 1-8 grouping and the rest of participants.

Box 4: Implementation of BP standards based on Post-Level				
Batho Pele Standard	Overall	L 1 - L8	L 9 – L12	L 13 – L16
1. Consultation	55 %	54,7 %	56,5 %	58,3 %
2. Service Standards	56,3 %	52,8 %	71,8 %	100 %
3. Access	<b>48,9 %</b>	<b>45,3 %</b>	63,5 %	100 %
4. Courtesy	55 %	53,5 %	61,2 %	75 %
5. Information	59,7 %	57,6 %	69,4 %	83,3 %
6. Openness & Transparency	52,3 %	50,3 %	58,8 %	91,7 %
7. Redress	<b>39,5 %</b>	<b>38,0 %</b>	<b>48,2 %</b>	<b>41,6 %</b>
8. Value for money	<b>48,2 %</b>	<b>45,9 %</b>	60 %	66,7 %

This disagreement relates to Value for Money (perceived efficient and economical provision services) and Access (equal right of all to benefit). The least disagreement between post-levels is with Information and Service Standards.

economical and efficient. All post-levels however agree that Redress (rapid response to concerns raised) is an area that requires serious improvement as Coghsta is not adhering to its agreed to standard.

## **POLICY IMPLICATIONS FOR PRODUCTIVITY MEASUREMENT & RECOMMENDATIONS**

From inception, the BP policy (1997) was intended to establish a new service delivery ethic in the public sector in line with South Africa's constitutional ideals for public administration which includes advancing a high level of organisational productivity vis-a-vis the efficient, economic and effective use of public resources. According to the reports of the PSC, this policy intent is not being realised adequately because the public service has failed to implement the Batho Pele principles. One of the reasons cited for this implementation failure is the lack of standards against which to measure the implementation of BP. Hence the pressing need for departments to develop measurable (and context-specific) BP standards. This study reveals that such a shift – from the implementation of guiding principles to measurable standards – has positive implications for departments such as Coghsta and Public Service productivity measurement in general. These implications are as follows:

- *Implications for Coghsta:* The Coghsta standard for Redress is as follows: *"If the promised standard of service is not delivered, service beneficiaries should be offered an apology, a full explanation and a speedy and effective remedy; within 30 working days."* Altogether 60.5% of participants expressed the view that Coghsta is not adhering to its Redress standard, making it the most serious BP implementation gap for Coghsta. It is thus recommended that Coghsta re-visits its complaints and compliments management system in order to improve on Redress.

- *Implications for Public Service Productivity Measurement:* This study shows that the setting of measurable, time-bound, and department-specific BP standards has to be prioritised to improve the overall measurement of the implementation of government's BP policy. The dictum: *"What gets measured gets managed, and what gets managed ultimately improves organisational performance and productivity"*, holds significant truth for public service organisations generally. It is therefore recommended that all public service departments should develop BP standards against which to measure the implementation success the BP policy. This new practice would enable public service departments to achieve quality service delivery improvements and organisational productivity success.

## **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

Hand-in-glove with the *White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery* (1997), the *Batho Pele Handbook* (1997) encourages public sector officials to strive for excellence in executing their service delivery mandates and to purposefully commit themselves to continuous service delivery improvement. This is short-hand for encouraging the public sector to commit itself to higher productivity in matters of service delivery and overall organisational performance. However, for the BP policy to play this vital role in raising productivity in the public sector, the implementation success (or failure) of its eight (8) transformative principles has to be measured against measurable and context-specific standards. If not, it would be difficult to say whether the behaviour of the bureaucracy is in sync with constitutional principle 195(1)(b) and the national vision of raising productivity as per the country's National Development Plan.

# THE STATE OF PRODUCTIVITY MEASUREMENT IN PUBLIC SERVICE ORGANISATIONS

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## ABSTRACT

This synopsis elucidates the findings of a questionnaire survey conducted amongst randomly selected public servants to determine: (1) how productivity is understood in public service organisations (cognition), and (2) the efforts of government departments to measure and manage organisational productivity (action).

**Keywords:** Public service productivity, efficiency, effectiveness, productivity measurement

## BACKGROUND

Despite the accepted importance of improved public service productivity in contributing to the growth of the economy and addressing the basic needs of citizens, much of the recent focus in South Africa's public service has been on performance and not productivity measurement. To understand the extent of this imbalance, the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) conducted a Baseline Survey (2017) to gather information on how productivity is understood in public service organisations and the efforts of government departments to measure and manage organisational productivity.

## SURVEY OBJECTIVES

This survey constitutes a mapping exercise aimed at determining the levels of understanding of public service productivity in public service organisations and the extent to which productivity is measured and managed in public service organisations.

## SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

In this survey, productivity measurement refers to a formalised system of assessing the efficiency and

effectiveness of an organisation. The survey questionnaire was distributed electronically to randomly selected public service officials at middle to senior management level. Officials were requested to complete the survey on behalf of their respective departments. Responses were obtained from 85 provincial and national government departments out of a total of 126 that were targeted; representing a response rate of 67.4%. The questionnaire (Attached hereto as Annexure A) included open-ended and closed questions.

## KEY FINDINGS

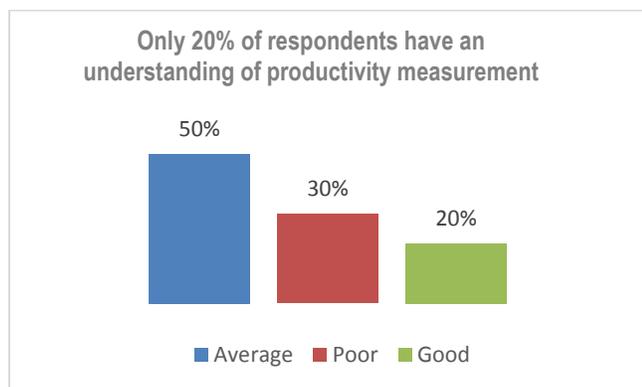
The survey results indicate a knowledge-gap in public officials' understanding of public service productivity measurement. Only 20% of respondents rated themselves as having a 'good' understanding of public service productivity measurement. The survey also shows that there is a general disagreement about the best possible location of the productivity measurement function/responsibility within the organisational structure.

Most importantly, the survey shows that existing public service assessment tools used to (i) determine organisational functionality, (ii) measure frontline service delivery satisfaction, and (iii) monitor organisational performance are erroneously regarded as productivity measurement

tools. Participant responses to specific survey questions are captured hereafter.

**Question 1: How would you rate your understanding of the concept of productivity measurement in the public service?**

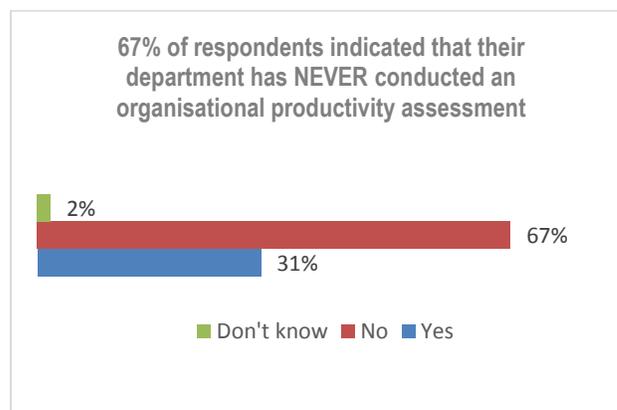
The survey found that 50% of the respondents have an “average” understanding of the concept of productivity measurement in the public service. Altogether 30% rated themselves as having a “poor” understanding of the concept, while 20% of the respondents say they have a “good” understanding of the concept. Overall, the findings point towards a limited understanding of the concept of public service productivity measurement amongst public service officials.



**Question 2: Has your department conducted any measurement of its overall productivity previously?**

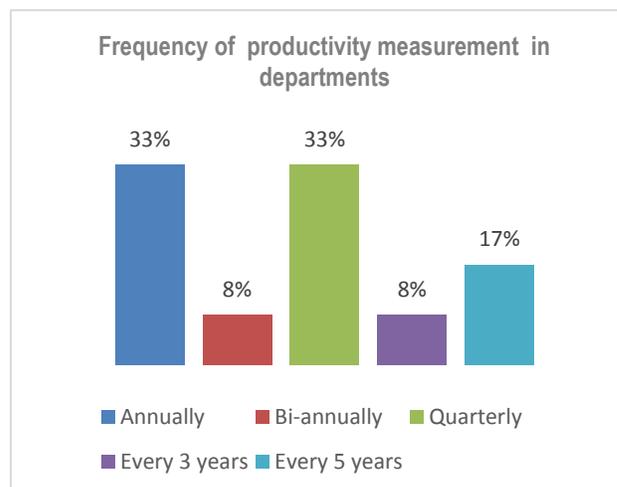
This question sought to assess whether departments have previously embarked on any activity aimed at measuring organisational productivity. The survey shows that 67% of the respondents affirmed that their departments have not undertaken any measurement of organisational productivity previously. Altogether 31% indicated that organisational productivity measurement has been undertaken in their respective departments, while 2% revealed that they do not know if such an assessment has ever been conducted in their department. Worth noting is that the 31% who indicated that their departments have undertaken organisational productivity measurement previously is not entirely accurate given that control-question 4 (“Do you measure organisational productivity or only the productivity of specific Units or Functions?”) shows that this group of

respondents confuse organisational productivity measurement with organisational performance management and other measurement tools such as the Frontline Service Delivery Monitoring Tool.



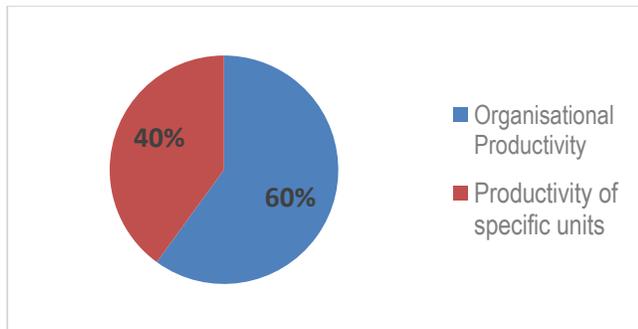
**Question 3: If your organisation measures organisational productivity, how often is this done?**

Of the 31% of respondents who indicated that productivity is being measured in their department, altogether 66% indicated that this happens on a quarterly and annual basis. This is perhaps a further indication that some within this group of respondents confuse productivity measurement with quarterly and annual performance assessments within their departments.



**Question 4: Do you measure overall organisational productivity or only the productivity of specific units or functions (e.g. in frontline delivery units or supply chain management)?**

Of the 31% who indicated that productivity measurement is undertaken in their departments, 60% indicated that this entails an assessment of overall organisational productivity.



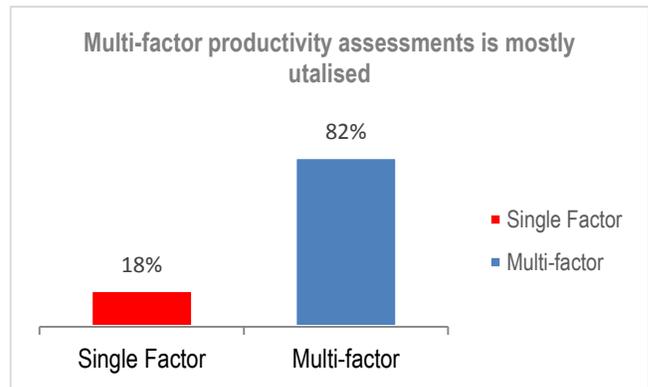
**Question 5: If your organisation does not measure organisational productivity, what do you think are the reasons why?**

Participant responses indicate that most government departments are not undertaking productivity measurements due to the absence of approved and clear guidelines and tools for the public service productivity measurement. Some respondents also cited a general lack of understanding of the concept of public service productivity measurement as an obstacle to the measurement thereof.

**Question 6.A If your organisation measures organisational productivity, indicate the methodology you generally use for the measurement of productivity (E.g. single-factor or multi-factor productivity measures).**

Of the 31% of respondents who indicated that their organisations measure overall productivity, 82% indicated that they use multi-factor productivity measurement. Single-factor productivity measurement relates to a measure of output to a single measure of input. Multi-factor productivity measurement relates to a measure of output to a bundle of inputs. Some of the responses received highlighted methods such as Frontline Service Delivery Tools, Benchmarking, Balance Scorecards, Employee Satisfaction Surveys, Complaints and Compliments Management Surveys, Roadshows and Organisational Functionality

Assessments as methodologies used to measure productivity in their respective departments.



This confirms the misunderstanding between tools for productivity measurement and general organisational performance management tools.

**Question 6.B: If your organisation does not measure organisational productivity, specify which method you would recommend for the measurement of organisational productivity?**

The following were some of the proposed methods:

- Performance Assessments, Annual Performance Plan results, Quarterly performance reporting.
- Client surveys, backward-process-analysis and process structure alignment.
- Work study measurement and individual performance management key performance areas.

These proposed methods allude to a lack of understanding of public service productivity measurement generally.

**Question 7: Do you think productivity should be measured in your department? YES or NO. Please state the reasons why?**

All respondents agree that productivity measurement must be undertaken in government departments citing the following reasons:

- (i) It will assist in understanding how departmental the resources are being utilised.
- (ii) It can be used for monitoring, planning and improving organisational performance.
- (iii) To determine if the staff, unit and department are doing what they are supposed to do, i.e. fulfilling their mandate effectively.
- (iv) To establish if key performance area targets are being achieved.

- (v) Productivity measurement would highlight organisational inefficiencies and bottlenecks in service delivery operations.
- (vi) Objective productivity measurement will indicate to the public at large the effectiveness and efficiency of government departments.

The reasons highlighted in (i)-(vi) all points to section 29 of the Public Service Regulations (2017), which determines that: “An executive authority must assess the efficiency and effectiveness of a department in supporting that department’s service delivery objectives using the assessment tools as may be directed by the Minister and submit the report to the Minister on such date and format as directed by the Minister”.

**Question 8: Please specify which unit in your department should conduct productivity measurement studies and why?**

This question sought to solicit ideas on how officials perceive the configuration of productivity measurement within their departments. Below is a list of units that officials proposed as most suited to take on the responsibility of productivity measurement:

- Human Resources Management
- Monitoring and Evaluation
- Governance, Risk and Compliance
- Organisational Design
- Planning and Strategy
- Internal Audit
- Strategic Management, Research and Planning

**Question 9: In your view, which of the following datasets would be most reliable when measuring organisational productivity?**

Generally respondents consider their departmental annual report as the most reliable dataset for measuring organisational productivity (55%). Other datasets (16%) mentioned by respondents include the following:

- (i) Service Delivery Improvement Plan report and customer surveys

- (ii) Research or impact studies on organisational service delivery

**Question 10: Why do you regard this particular dataset as most reliable?**

Data reliability and validity is important when measuring productivity. Respondents regarded their departmental annual report as the most reliable dataset due to the following reasons:

- (i) Currently the departmental Annual Report is the only reliable source of data available.
- (ii) Information is audited and confirmed by management and political leadership.
- (iii) Distinct and easy to interpret and understand.
- (iv) It is reliable as it provides the department with an opportunity to identify its performance against its set targets.
- (v) It is evidence-based and can be verified.
- (vi) PERSAL data is perceived as unreliable and inadequately configured to allow for meaningful calculations and representation of organisational productivity.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of the 2017 Baseline Survey on the measurement of organisational productivity, the study recommends the following:

- (i) The DPSA must intensify its efforts to promote a common understanding of productivity measurement in the public service using the currently approved Productivity Measurement Framework.
- (ii) The DPSA should expand its advocacy initiatives aimed at empowering officials about the approved Productivity Measurement Framework and the concept of public service productivity using common productivity assessment tools.
- (iii) A centralised government-wide data management centre needs to be established given the challenges related to the availability of credible datasets in the public service.

# THE IMPACT OF WORKPLACE PRESENTEEISM ON PUBLIC SERVICE PRODUCTIVITY

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## ABSTRACT

This article draws attention to the impact of workplace presenteeism on Public Service Productivity (PSP) by discussing its prevalence in a selected public service organisation and asking whether public service organisations have suitable strategies in place to mitigate the impact of presenteeism on organisational productivity.

**Keywords:** Presenteeism, absenteeism, workplace shirking, public service productivity.

## INTRODUCTION

One of the frequently acknowledged challenges related to improving organisational productivity is the high levels of workplace absenteeism due to illness and other reasons. Research conducted by Statistics South Africa found that on average 15% of employees are absent on any given day, resulting in lost productivity costing the economy between R12-billion and R16-billion annually (*Mail & Guardian*, 2015). There is however a 'new' and perhaps even greater challenge to organisational productivity in the form of workplace presenteeism (*Levin-Epstein*, 2005). And the public sector in particular, it would seem, is not paying adequate attention to this 'new' threat to its levels of productivity. This study therefore draws attention to the impact of workplace presenteeism on Public Service Productivity (PSP) by discussing its prevalence in a selected public service organisation and asking whether such organisations have appropriate strategies in place to mitigate the impact of presenteeism on its productivity.

## DEFINING WORKPLACE PRESENTEEISM

Health-related absenteeism is an easily understandable concept of not attending work when ill. In this instance, the lost productivity to the organisation is 100% each day the

employee is not on the job. Workplace presenteeism, on the other hand, refers to the lost productivity that arises when employees continue to work when unwell or are distracted from achieving full productivity due other events such as 'office politics' or child care problems (*Cocker*, 2013). This lost productivity can include performance issues such as not meeting deadlines, difficulty in concentrating, not being able to think clearly, making mistakes, and not being able to carry out the physical requirements of a job (e.g. lifting objects). Another major contributor to lost organisational productivity is workplace shirking, which refers to employees who are at work but not working to their full capacity due to personal motivation issues on their part or gross deficiencies in organisational leadership and supervision that manifest in employees not being held to account for workplace deliverables. From a PSP improvement perspective, the prevalence and impact of workplace absenteeism, presenteeism and shirking must be better understood, measured, and managed.

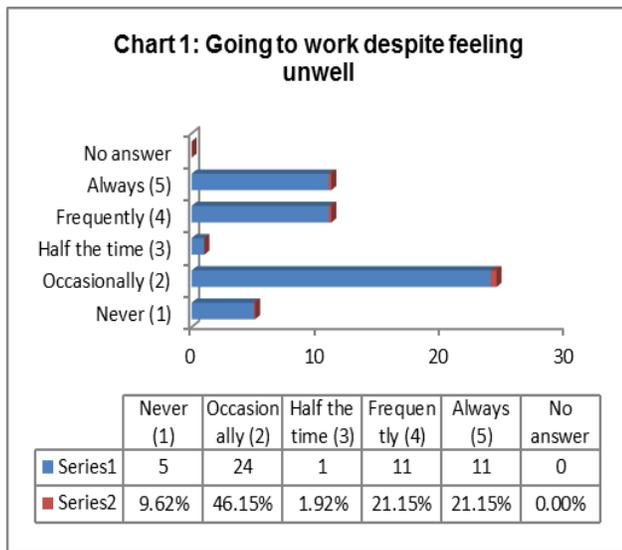
It is well-established that a great number of employees come to work not feeling well – they work with allergies, back pain, chronic illnesses, stress about organisational politics or child care responsibilities, and other factors that can impair their workplace performance and productivity (*Cocker*, 2013). Some employees come to work with contagious illnesses such

as influenza or a common cold that may infect others, and this could contribute to further absenteeism and/or presenteeism in the workplace.

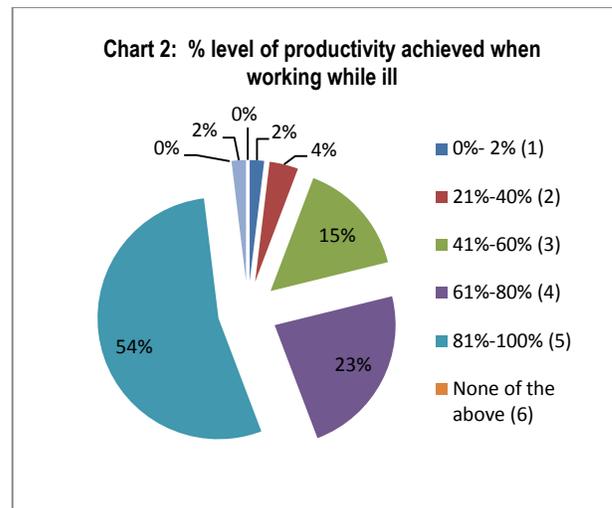
### WORKPLACE PRESENTEEISM IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATION

To explore the impact of workplace presenteeism on PSP, the Directorate: Productivity and Efficiency Studies conducted a survey amongst a sample of employees of the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) in January 2015. The following are some of the results that emerged:

1) Collectively, almost half of the respondents ‘always’ or ‘frequently’ reports for work despite feeling unwell (42.5%). The DPSA is thus losing almost half their contribution to the organisation’s productivity on the days when these employees are at work and not feeling well (see Chart 1 below).



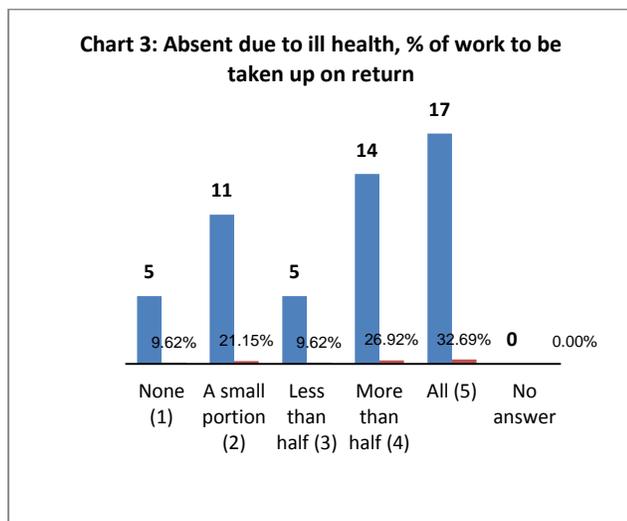
This significant loss in productivity is affirmed by Chart 2 that shows employee perceptions that they lose almost half (46%) their usual levels of productivity due to illness at work.



2) Allergies (18%) are the most common illness contributing to workplace presenteeism in the DPSA. Employees interviewed cited their physical working environment as the primary reason for their allergies – unhygienic carpets, closed windows/poor ventilation and pigeon faeces that, when it dries, becomes airborne and is inhaled through the air-conditioning vents that are almost permanently broken. The study revealed that influenza and common colds account for 13% of illnesses, followed by migraines (10%). The high occurrence of influenza and colds amongst employees who come to work while ill, means they contribute to further presenteeism and/or absenteeism in the workplace due to the infectious nature of their illness. Depression and coughs accounted for 9 % respectively. The relatively high ranking of depression in the DPSA is in line with international trends which show that depression usually ranks high amongst illnesses associated with presenteeism because of the unwillingness of some employees to disclose their condition to their employer (Cocker, 2013). They worry that if they disclose they may be at risk of losing their job and not finding another.

3) A principal reason cited by DPSA respondents for not taking paid sick leave when ill, is that their work will not be attended to should they be absent. Over 32% of DPSA employees surveyed indicated that all their work will not be attended to should they be absent, whereas

a further 26.9 % indicated that 'more than half' their work would not be attended to (see Chart 3). Given these experiences, employees indicated that they would rather report for work when ill despite the fact that their productivity levels may be less than 100%.



## QUESTIONS ARISING FROM THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

1. Are public service departments able to distinguish between absenteeism, presenteeism and shirking in the workplace? And if so, how do they monitor the impact of these phenomena on organisational productivity?
2. What strategies do departments have in place to reduce the contribution of the physical working environment to workplace presenteeism?
3. What strategies do departments have in place to reduce workplace presenteeism resulting from anxieties (worries) employees may experience in the workplace due to their parental responsibilities (e.g. a child care problem)?
4. What strategies do departments have in place to manage the impact of "office politics" on workplace presenteeism?

# REVIEWING THE SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL OF THUSONG SERVICE CENTRES FOR INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY

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## ABSTRACT

There is a general acceptance among government and civil society stakeholders that the Service Delivery Model (SDM) underpinning South Africa's Thusong Service Centres (TSCs) is inadequately configured to meet the growing demand for accessible, quality public services. This article identifies key issues that should be considered in reviewing the configuration of the SDM of the country's 178 TSCs. The article points out that the current *collation model* is indeed inadequate and recommends that this model should evolve towards a more *collaborate partnership model* in which the service offerings of TSCs are realigned to respond to the needs of citizens in a more effective, efficient (productive) and holistic manner.

**Keywords:** Thusong Service Centre, service delivery model, collation model, collaborative model, productivity.

## BACKGROUND

Thusong Service Centres (Service Centres), formerly known as Multi-Purpose Community Centres (MPCCs), were initiated in 1999 as "one-stop centres" with a view to providing government services and information in one physical place, closer to where communities live.

The 2006 – 2014 Thusong Service Centre Business Plan (Business Plan) describes the policy context, the value proposition, rationale and strategic framework and implementation plan for the delivery of the Programme. It focuses strongly on clarifying the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders across the three spheres and the establishment of partnerships within and outside of Government. The Business Plan also describes key aspects of the SDM for the provisioning of Service Centres.

Various reviews of the Thusong Programme have been conducted in the past:

- A review of the Thusong Programme by the Public Service Commission (PSC) in 2009 to determine whether departments were effective in promoting integrated service delivery at Service Centres.
- A study conducted by DPSA in collaboration with the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) Department in 2014 – 2015 in relation to the geographic accessibility and optimum provisioning of Service Centres.
- A further study by DPSA in collaboration with GCIS, National Treasury and the Departments of Cooperative Government in 2015 to develop a business case in relation to possible institutional arrangements for the future location, funding and coordination of the Thusong Programme. The report was published and presented to Cabinet for consideration in 2016.

The findings and recommendations emanating from the aforementioned reviews have been consolidated and these have been considered in this review of the Thusong SDM.

## **CURRENT CHALLENGES**

Previous reviews of the Thusong Programme suggest that there is value in having centres that provide information and government services situated in close proximity to where people live. This is especially the case in rural areas where people would have to travel long distances if the Thusong centre or access point (mobile unit) did not exist or in areas where communities have limited resources for transport.

It is evident however that the Business Plan has not been implemented as originally expected. There are numerous systemic and operational challenges that are undermining the effectiveness and sustainability of the Programme.

The Programme has a proliferation of coordination structures within and across the three spheres. These have generally proved to be ineffective and inefficient and have led to fragmentation and failure to deal with endemic challenges. The national coordination function, which is located within the GCIS Department, is chronically under-resourced. Furthermore, there are large provincial disparities in the allocation of human resources for the management and coordination of the programme.

The Thusong Programme lacks adequate funding. It receives no direct funding from national government and a single point of coordination does not exist for the raising of funds. As a result the burden for coordinating funding falls on municipalities which are often cash-strapped and/or have other funding priorities.

It is also evident that the lack of a regulatory framework, administrative oversight and formalised protocols and procedures has resulted in numerous operational challenges and a lack of accountability for the performance of the Thusong Programme.

It is apparent that services that are provided by various stakeholders at Service Centres have not been integrated as envisaged in the Thusong Business Plan. Whereas some degree of collaboration exists in pursuing joint mobile routes, departments and municipalities continue to provide

their services at Service Centres in organisational silos. Each focuses on its own services; planning is done in isolation of the Programme; and inadequate coordination and sharing of information takes place.

The current SDM relies on a network of fixed and mobile services infrastructure to provide services and information to people living in historically disadvantaged areas. This infrastructure is very expensive to establish and maintain and rising costs place additional pressures on the Thusong Programme.

As many existing Service Centre facilities currently do not have ICT connectivity or do not fully utilise the available bandwidth, services rely predominantly on over-the-counter interaction between Centre staff and citizens, and services are generally informational rather than transactional. As a result the SDM is not keeping pace with the service delivery innovations and evolving e-Government maturity models of departments, such as Home Affairs and SASSA, which seek to provide services on-line.

Many Service Centres have over time become dysfunctional as they lack sufficient space for departments to operate, no ICT connectivity exists and physical infrastructure has crumbled. Hence departments prefer to locate their services elsewhere. Other challenges include the lack of operational guidelines and standard operating procedures. Furthermore, Centre Managers have neither standardised job descriptions nor formal delegations to oversee the day-to-day operations within the Service Centres.

## **STRATEGIC REPOSITIONING OF THE THUSONG PROGRAMME**

Whereas informal cooperation between stakeholders may have been a useful beginning to achieving integrated service delivery through the Thusong Programme, consideration should be given to the elevation of the Programme from its current status as an ad hoc initiative to a fully mandated and formally institutionalised programme of Government.

In order for it to achieve its vision of “*access to integrated government information and services to build a better quality of life for all*”, the Programme should among other:

- Be firmly located within the broader social and economic transformation agenda of Government as highlighted in the National Development Plan (NDP); it should be structured around common goals and shared and desired outcomes of Government; and participating departments and government agencies should agree upon joint strategies and interventions for achieving these through the Thusong Programme.
- Be aligned with strategic initiatives of Government to modernise and integrate the provisioning of public services, especially through the implementation of the envisaged National E-strategy. The NDP highlights the importance of ICTs as enablers of service delivery. ICTs improve the accessibility of government services and information, they reduce geographical divides and they can facilitate participative and inclusive development across the country. Hence the Thusong SDM should be supported by a strong ICT infrastructure and Service Centres should be fully e-enabled. Strong emphasis should be placed on initiatives to develop digital literacy skills of citizens.

### **COLLABORATIVE SERVICE DELIVERY MODALITIES**

The current “one-stop shop” collocation model should over time evolve toward a more collaborative partnership model in which service offerings of various stakeholders are realigned to respond to the needs of people in a more holistic and seamless manner. Such collaboration would require a much greater commitment from stakeholders to the achievement of common outcomes; collaborative governance arrangements, the sharing of information; the realignment of service offerings; strong coordination of joint initiatives; and the pooling of resources to meet the needs of service beneficiaries in a more holistic and seamless manner. The literature on organisational efficiency and effectiveness suggests that collaborative partnerships lead to improved organisational productivity (Martin, 2006; PRC, 2006; NPI, 2005). Collaboration also requires new forms of leadership and network management skills.

Consideration should be given to service delivery modalities, involving interrelated or complementary

services, which have been implemented successfully in various provinces, and which could supplement and strengthen the current Thusong SDM. These arrangements are often more citizen-centric and responsive to the needs of citizens; they also tend to be more flexible and could create synergies that lead to innovation and streamlining of service delivery. The Presidency War Room model serves as a possible example.

### **CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT AND STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION**

An indicator of the success of a Service Centre should be the degree to which it becomes an integral part of the community it serves, by offering a range of services and information that communities can use to transact their daily lives and use for their own development. A strong emphasis should be placed on relations management and continuous citizen and stakeholder engagement and consultation. Consideration should be given to:

- Citizens and local community groups and structures should be engaged about what sorts of services are most required at Service Centres and how government service delivery mechanisms should be crafted. They should also be involved in the process of resolving service delivery challenges and failures.
- Those institutions that provide services at Service Centres should have a clear and common understanding of the needs of citizens. Key stakeholders should be brought together to share and pool information about the needs of different cohorts of citizens and groups with complex needs and those that require extended care. Greater coordination of support and joint activities are required to respond to the needs of vulnerable groups.
- The roles that Community Development Workers (CDWs) could perform in facilitating citizen engagement and participation as part of the Thusong Programme, as described in Chapter 8 of the Public Service Regulations (2016).

## MINIMUM SERVICE PACKAGES AND SPATIAL LOCATION OF SERVICE CENTRES

The geographic location of Service Centres and the selection of services that should be provided require a thorough understanding of the local context and the service catchment population as well as services that are provided in adjacent settlements.

The Department of Rural Development and Land Reform has profiled and classified settlements across the country according to their functional, demographic and economic characteristics and it has developed minimum service packages for each (Green and Argue 2016). Such profiling could possibly assist in identifying particular areas which should be given priority and would ensure that services respond appropriately to the needs of local communities.

Social programmes which are intended to provide health care, education, social services, transportation and communication facilities, and the like, may require a more in-depth demographic analysis (CSIR 2000) and consultation with local structures to examine the nature of services that are to be provided and to determine the most appropriate delivery mechanisms.

Community and household surveys, which are periodically conducted by Statistics South Africa, and the South African Index of Multiple Deprivation provide valuable data which could be analysed to provide a more in-depth understanding of needs at a local level. Such profiles would assist in:

- Identifying particular areas which should be given priority and which should be targeted, for instance, through the implementation of Thusong Outreach Projects.
- Reviewing the basket of services which is provided by Service Centres in different areas.

Geographic accessibility studies can assist in determining the optimal size and location of various types of Service Centres, including fixed and mobile facilities, with a view to meeting population demand.

## MODERNISATION OF SERVICES AND THE ADOPTION OF MULTIPLE DELIVERY CHANNELS

The current Thusong SDM needs to keep pace with the evolving SDMs of departments such as Home Affairs and SASSA as well as the Western Cape Government. These have been redesigning and automating their processes and they have adopted multi-channel delivery strategies which provide citizens with a wider range of options and mechanisms to access information and to transact government services. Departments are also entering into strategic partnerships with other government entities and the private sector to expand their footprint in the country. Hence the Thusong SDM should make provision for a wider mix of delivery channels, which includes the traditional Thusong Service Centre typology as well as the rapidly advancing ICTs and mobile telecommunication applications that are becoming available. The Programme should leverage on the roll out of broadband and connectivity across the country and it should refocus its efforts on establishing and maintaining a supportive ICT infrastructure at Service Centres. Consideration should be given to:

- The development of a new ICT model for Service Centres as well as a framework for ICT maintenance and repairs.
- Providing digital literacy training programmes to enable people to benefit from the opportunities that are provided by modern ICT technologies and access to the Internet.
- Mobile technology applications (“Apps”) which the Thusong Programme could use to provide citizens with easy access to information and social networks.
- The deployment of mobile ICT kiosks which provide access to the Internet.

Consideration should also be given to how the Thusong Programme could achieve greater participation among stakeholders in the physical planning of Service Centres; the coordinated deployment of mobile services; the spatial clustering of facilities of different departments in close proximity to each other; and initiatives of the Department

of Public Works to establish government precincts in strategic locations.

## **ENABLING INSTITUTIONAL AND ORGANISATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS**

Whereas each department or agency remains responsible for its defined and focussed role in the Thusong Programme, it is important that cross-agency issues should be addressed in a coordinated manner through the establishment of new institutional, organisational and accountability arrangements. Section 18(1)(b) of the Public Administration Management Act (2014) makes provision for the Minister for the Public Service and Administration to make regulations regarding such a framework. The latter should be developed within the context of the Intergovernmental Relations Act and other relevant legislation. Key aspects that could possibly be considered include:

- Political and administrative oversight of the Thusong Programme.
- Institutional and governance arrangements to support the overall coordination of the Programme, including protocols for resolving disputes.
- Funding, resourcing and ownership of assets.
- Provisioning and maintenance of physical and ICT infrastructure and connectivity.
- Establishment of operational systems and standardised processes and the development of operational guidelines.
- Development of a delegations and accountability framework.
- The establishment of Service Centres.
- Centre management.
- The setting of norms and standards.
- The establishment of a monitoring and evaluation, quality assurance and reporting system.

Consideration should be given to the institutional location of the Thusong Programme in a central government department or agency as recommended in the 2016 DPSA and National Treasury report emanating from the

situational analysis and options assessment. This institution should be responsible for determining the overall policy framework and strategic direction of the Programme and for providing overall oversight, coordination and support as outlined in the Thusong Business Plan. It should be appropriately resourced to perform the function.

The provincial lead department and coordinating structure should take responsibility for determining provincial institutional and organisational arrangements for the delivery of the Programme within broad guidelines set by the national coordinating institution. The provincial department should also ensure that the Thusong Programme is fully integrated into its provincial strategic and operational planning frameworks and service delivery processes.

Local Municipalities should include the planning for Service Centres in their Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) and spatial planning frameworks to ensure that they contribute to the spatial transformation of urban rural and urban spaces and the integrated development initiatives of the three spheres. They should also ensure the operational functionality and the maintenance of the Service Centres as described in the Thusong Business Plan.

Sector departments that provide services at Service Centres should identify possible areas of collaboration with other departments, spheres of government and other stakeholders within the context of the Thusong Programme. They should also review their back-office arrangements to support service integration at front-line service points.

## **FUNDING AND RESOURCING**

Whereas some funding for Service Centres is currently being provided by provincial governments and local municipalities, consideration should be given to the establishment of a more sustainable and longer term funding model for the Thusong Programme. Due to current economic constraints in the country it may be necessary to identify existing revenue streams within Government which could assist in the funding of the Programme.

Consideration should also be given to:

- Alternative service delivery options and innovations that have become available and which could reduce the need for expensive facility infrastructure in the future.
- Possible cost savings which could be achieved through greater operational efficiencies.
- The fostering of strategic partnerships with the private sector, public entities and institutions such as the SA Post Office.

## **PLANNING, MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

Consideration should be given to the development of a planning, monitoring and evaluation framework for the Thusong Programme. The respective roles of national and provincial coordination departments and local authorities in the implementation and management of such a system should be defined. The framework could possibly include:

- Overall programmatic outcomes, objectives and indicators at a national level.
- Annual operational work plans and budgets with clearly defined deliverables and performance indicators and particular time intervals (at a provincial and/or local government level).
- Measuring instruments and formalised reporting templates and procedures.
- A performance reporting tool (possibly an online tool).
- A database management system.

Data should be analysed regularly to assess the performance of Service Centres and to determine trends and shortcomings. The system could also be used to develop user statistics and to track preferences for various types of services.

## **UNIFORMITY AND STANDARDISATION**

The Thusong SDM should be standardised across all provinces. The same service standards should also apply to all Service Centres. Sector departments that provide services at Service Centres should design "easy-to-use" guides that document standardised service delivery processes and procedures. A standards-based approach should also be followed in the provisioning of different

types and sizes of Service Centre facilities and the establishment and maintenance of physical and ICT infrastructure.

## **PHYSICAL AND ICT INFRASTRUCTURE**

A new ICT model and a framework for ICT maintenance and repairs are required. This model needs to evolve to keep abreast with the ICT maturity models of departments and stakeholders that generally provide services at Service Centres. The ICT needs of department and other stakeholders should be determined and these should be considered in the development of minimum ICT standards and the development of the new ICT model for Service Centres.

All departments should consult DPW about their office typologies and space norms and these should be considered in the planning of new Service Centres or the refurbishment and expansion of existing facilities, and in the establishment of Government Precincts.

Facilities should also make provision for office space for departments such as Social Development and Health that need a base to launch and coordinate non-centre based programmes such as social protection, early childhood development and health care and nutrition.

Service Centre management

Standardised job descriptions, formal delegations and a competency profile should be developed for Centre Managers to enable them to plan and make decisions and to oversee the day-to-day operations within the Centres. Such delegations should make provision made for the setting and enforcement of minimum service standards and the reporting of staff performance. Consideration should also be given to the establishment of performance contracts for Centre Managers to ensure that agreed deliverables are achieved. The responsibility for centre management and the appointment of Service Centre Managers should preferably be vested in local municipalities as these are responsible for the establishment, maintenance and operations of Service Centres.

## CONCLUSION

This review, as well as previous reviews of the Thusong Programme that are discussed in this report, have found that the current “one-stop-shop” services model is failing to achieve the level of service integration that was originally envisaged in the Business Plan.

It is apparent that the current collocation model should evolve towards a more collaborative partnership model in which service offerings of various stakeholders are realigned to respond to the needs of people in a more holistic and seamless manner. This will require greater commitment from stakeholders to achieving common outcomes and shared objectives through the Thusong Programme.

The Programme should also respond to changes that are taking place in the external environment; including social, technological, economic, and policy changes such as:

- Legislative and regulatory requirements in relation to the management and administration of public services.
- The changing spatial realities, socioeconomic environment and demographic composition of the country; including migration and settlement patterns and the youthful profile of the population.
- The evolving service delivery needs and expectations of citizens in relation to the quality and types of services that they require and the manner in which services are provided.
- The increasingly powerful and user-friendly digital technologies that are becoming available and which provide more choice to citizens in relation to how they communicate with one another and with Government, and access information and transact government services as well as opportunities that are available.

- The Thusong SDM should keep abreast with the evolving SDMs of departments which are using ICT and other innovations to modernise and integrate their services. Hence the Thusong Programme should refocus its efforts on establishing and maintaining a supportive ICT infrastructure at Service Centres.

Whereas informal cooperation between stakeholders may have been a useful beginning to achieving integrated service delivery through the Thusong Programme, it is evident that a much more systemic approach is necessary to deal with the numerous challenges that have been identified and to ensure its effectiveness and sustainability.

Local and international case studies that are discussed in the report demonstrate that government-wide service integration initiatives generally take time and that, among other, they require political championship, strong leadership, carefully crafted strategies and frameworks, budget prioritisation and longer term funding, and a governance structure that brings all key stakeholders together.

The DPSA has hosted two consultative workshops with representatives of a range of national government departments on what a new Thusong SDM should look like. Extensive consultation will be required with provincial departments and local government and other key stakeholders within the context of the Intergovernmental Relations Act. Time will also be required to allow for the development of an institutional framework for the Programme, as envisaged in the Public Administration Management Act.

# INCREASING PRODUCTIVITY BY OPTIMISING ACCESS TO PUBLIC SERVICES: A GEOGRAPHIC ACCESSIBILITY ANALYSIS OF THUSONG SERVICE CENTRES

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## ABSTRACT

Since 1999, almost half of South Africa's population (43%) have used government's Thusong Service Centre (TSC) Programme to access public services delivered by departments such as Home Affairs, Labour, and Social Development. The importance of this programme in delivering public services to citizens is therefore not in dispute. What is at question is whether there is an optimal geographic distribution of TSCs (and government service delivery points) across the country to ensure improved citizen access and greater efficiency and effectiveness (productivity) in service delivery. This study therefore asks: What is the current geographic spread of TSCs and where should these facilities ideally be located to ensure optimal citizen access and increased productivity? This study seeks to answer these questions through empirical research and the use of Geographic Information System (GIS) modelling.

**Keywords:** Thusong Service Centre, Geographic Information System (GIS), productivity.

## BACKGROUND

Studies on the efficacy, location, and accessibility of Thusong Service Centres (TSCs) have been conducted by a number of South African institutions. The Public Service Commission (PSC), for example, conducted a study on the geographic location of TSCs and their effectiveness in providing integrated services to the public in 2011 (see PSC, 2011). And in the period 2012 to 2016, a number of government departments have published studies on improving access to services using geographic accessibility modelling and geographic information systems (GIS). A primary shortcoming of these studies is that they were either limited to TSCs in a specific province (see Snyman 2017) or focused specifically on accessibility to a single provincial department such as access to healthcare (see Gauteng Department of Health, 2016). The Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) has also conducted

government service-point accessibility studies in 2013 for the City of Johannesburg and the City of eThekweni respectively. In 2010, the DPSA finalised a study on the accessibility of government services in the thirteen most poverty-stricken areas of the country. What these studies have in common is that none of them were nationally-focused studies. This particular study is however unique in that it is the first-ever nationally-focused study on accessibility to TSCs that makes use of GIS modelling, taking into account the dimensions of geographic proximity (i.e. 'distance') as well as the ability of service points to meet the service demands of a specific catchment area (i.e. 'capacity of service point'). To determine the optimal geographic location of TSCs and the optimal clustering of service points, one has to first establish the existing levels of accessibility to TSCs and clustered service points. This was done using spatial data from Census 2011, road network

data (2015) and service point data (2015). For the GIS modelling, this study developed the following: a settlement typology for the country; distance standards (i.e. road distance to access a service point); and specific capacity constraints for the various types of TSCs. Following the afore-mentioned systematic approach, this study establishes both the current geographic spread of TSCs across South Africa, and the optimal geographic location of TSC in all nine provinces.

## LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK GOVERNING PUBLIC SERVICE PROVISION AND TSCs

The South African Constitution (1996), together with an array of enabling legislation and government policies,

seeks to ensure equitable and easy-access to affordable, quality public services for all citizens. These laws and policies include the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service (WPTPS, 1995), the White Paper on Improving Service Delivery (Batho Pele White Paper, 1997), the Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act (SPLUMA, 2013), the National Development Plan (2012), the Integrated Development Framework (2016), and the Public Service Regulations (2016). Collectively, these laws and policies outline the strategic importance and role of TSCs in realising the promise of equitable, affordable, accessible and quality public service delivery in South Africa (see Box 1)

Box 1: Legal and Policy Framework					
Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996)	WPTPS (1995) and Batho Pele White Paper (1997)	National Development Plan (2012)	SPLUMA (2013)	Integrated Development Framework (2016)	Public Service Regulations (2016)
Section 195 requires that public services are provided to all citizens irrespective of their race, socio-economic status or geographic location. These services must be provided impartially, fairly, equitably and without bias.	Identifies access to services as one of the Batho Pele principles, i.e. "All citizens should have equal access to services to which they are entitled". Also aims to rectify inequalities in the distribution of existing services.	Identifies the need to reshape South Africa's cities, towns and rural areas; and to develop policies, plans and instruments to reduce travel distances and costs to service delivery points.	Provides for a uniform, effective and comprehensive system of spatial planning and land use management in order to, inter alia, redress the imbalances of the past and ensure equity in the application of spatial development planning and land use management systems.	Objective is to ensure spatial integration, improve access to services and promote social and economic inclusion, specifically focusing on urban areas.	Section 38 requires of an Executive Authority to establish and maintain a service delivery plan that is aligned to the strategic plan of the department with due regard for the service recipient's means of access to the services and the barriers to increased access, whilst developing strategies to progressively remove these access barriers and increase access to services.

## GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION OF THUSONG SERVICE CENTRES ACROSS SOUTH AFRICA

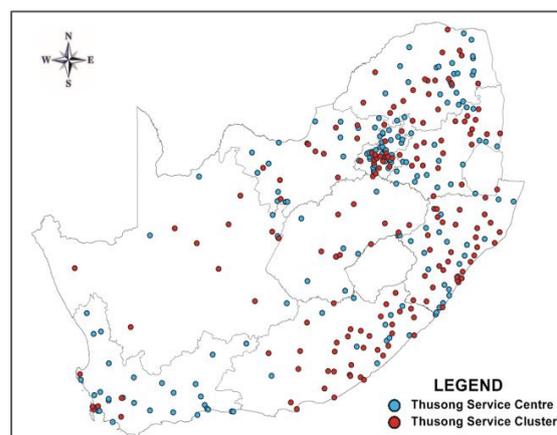
In 2014, there were 178 TSCs and 165 Service Clusters across South Africa, representing a total of 343 public service delivery centres across the country (see Box 2).

**Box 2: Thusong Service Centres (TSCs) and Clusters per province, 2014**

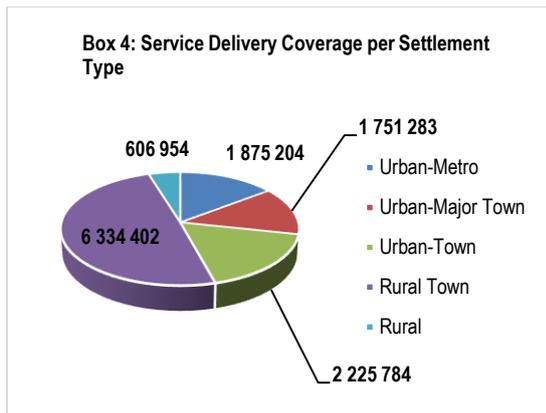
Province	TSCs	TSC Clusters	Total Number of Service Delivery Centres
Eastern Cape	11	35	46
Free State	10	11	21
Gauteng	41	16	57
KwaZulu-Natal	22	33	55
Limpopo	22	19	41
Mpumalanga	18	23	41
North West	16	12	28
Northern Cape	5	10	15
Western Cape	33	6	39
<b>National</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>343</b>

The above data shows that in 2014, public service delivery centres (TSC and Service Clusters) were predominantly situated in the Gauteng (57), KwaZulu-Natal (55), Eastern Cape (46), Mpumalanga (41) and Limpopo (41) provinces where population counts are relatively higher than other provinces. Box 3 shows the geographic distribution of TSCs (blue) and Service Clusters (red), indicating that some public service delivery centres are located close to provincial boundaries where they provide service coverage to people living in adjacent provinces.

**Box 3: Geographic distribution of TCS and Service Clusters**

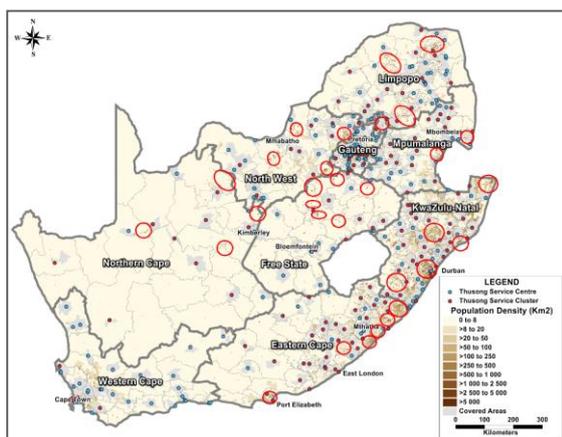


At the time of the study (2014), the population of South Africa was 51,762 million, noting that the population count has increased to approximately 55 million people in 2017. The study shows that in 2014, a total of 38,968,331 (75%) people had access to a TSC within a maximum travel distance of 15 km in urban areas, and 25 km in more sparsely populated rural areas. The data further shows that although TSCs play a crucial role in ensuring that 17 million people have access to public services, Service Clusters play a much more important role given that it ensured access to services for an additional 22 million people in 2014. The 2014 data further shows that population coverage by service delivery centres are uneven across and within provinces. Coverage is high in Gauteng (96.99%), Mpumalanga (81.13%) and the Western Cape (77.69%) provinces, but lower in the Free State (62.85%), Eastern Cape (61.04%) and North West (59.08%) provinces. Service delivery coverage is lowest in the Northern Cape (51%) province given its sparse population and long travel distances. Service delivery coverage also varies in different types of settlements. Of the 12,793 million people that did not have access to a service delivery centre, 6,3 million live in rural towns followed by urban towns (see Box 4).



The 2014 data also revealed that the highest number of people that do not have adequate access to public service delivery centres live in KwaZulu-Natal and Eastern Cape provinces. These provinces have limited road infrastructure as well as mountains and rivers in some areas causing natural barriers that affect accessibility. Similar challenges were observed in parts of Limpopo where the Waterberg and Soutpansberg mountain ranges limit accessibility. Box 6 highlights densely populated rural and urban areas where people do not have adequate access to service delivery centres. These areas are highlighted by red circles and, in some instances, span municipal boundaries.

**Box 5: Densely populated areas where people have inadequate access to services**



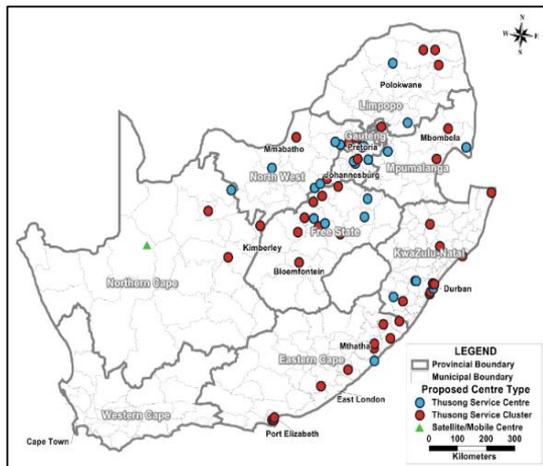
**PROPOSED LOCATION OF THUSONG SERVICE CENTRES ACROSS SOUTH AFRICA**

Whereas the national population coverage that is currently provided by Service Centres is 75.28%, this coverage is uneven across provinces and different types of settlement. Hence, the overall objective of the analysis was to propose a more equitable distribution of Service Centres across the country. The accessibility analysis has identified 67 optimum locations for the establishment of additional Service Centres, including 42 Thusing Service Clusters and 25 Thusing Service Centres, which will increase the total number of Service Centres in the country from 343 to 410.

The number of proposed locations varies per province. More locations were identified in KwaZulu-Natal, the Free State, the Eastern Cape and North West, where the current provision and location of Service Centres are inadequate to meet the high population demand. Even though Limpopo and Mpumalanga are currently well supplied with Service Centres, additional locations were identified in densely populated areas where access to services is currently inadequate. The population demand on some facilities in Gauteng is extremely high and hence additional locations were identified along key access routes. The geographic distribution of the proposed locations is illustrated in Figure 1 and 2.

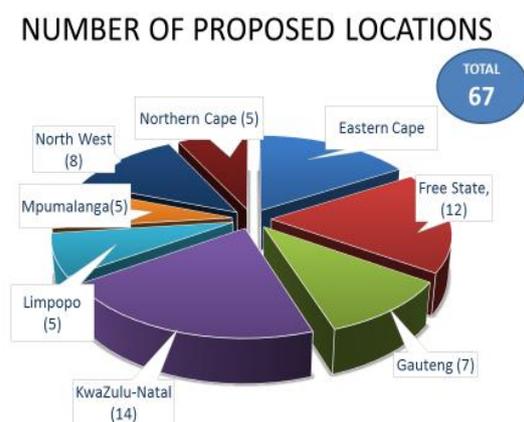
Establishment of additional Service Centres at the 67 proposed locations could potentially increase the population coverage in the country from 75.28% to 83.19%. This coverage could be increased even further through the provisioning of mobile services. Coverage could potentially be extended to more than 4 million people and all settlement types would benefit, particularly major towns and rural towns where the majority of un-served population currently resides.

**Figure 1: Distribution of the Proposed Locations across the country**



From Box 6 it is evident that the greatest improvements in population coverage could be achieved in the Eastern Cape (1 023 937 people), KwaZulu-Natal (896 919 people) and the North West (608 671 people), followed by Limpopo (531 932 people). Gauteng and Mpumalanga would benefit least in terms of improved coverage as additional locations were mainly identified to reduce the excessive population demand on some existing TSCs and Clusters.

**Figure 2: Proposed locations per province**



**Box 6: Population coverage per province based on the optimum provisioning of service centres**

Province	Number of additional locations	Potential improvement in population coverage	Percentage improvement in coverage	Total envisaged population coverage
Eastern Cape	11	1 023 937	20.36%	5 028 053
Free State	12	455 782	20.90%	2 181 171
Gauteng	7	157 897	1.31%	12 060 077
KwaZulu-Natal	14	896 919	10.99%	8 158 162
Limpopo	5	531 932	12.82%	4 147 856
Mpumalanga	5	131 643	3.86%	3 408 692
North West	8	608 671	22.69%	2 682 189
Northern Cape	5	283 564	32.59%	870 080
Western Cape	-	0	0.00%	4 522 396
<b>National</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>4 090 345</b>	<b>9.50%</b>	<b>43 058 676</b>

Metropolitan areas could also benefit significantly, especially in the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal, and major urban towns in the Free State and North West could benefit. Population coverage increases from 82% to 90% in major urban towns followed by rural towns where coverage increases from 65% to 75.85% with the inclusion of proposed locations as in Box 7.

**Box 7: Population coverage per settlement type based on the proposed provisioning of Service Centres**

Settlement Typology	Current Population Covered	Current % Coverage	Potential Population Coverage
Urban-Metro	17 727 881	90.43%	18 648 352
Urban-Major Town	7 978 549	82.00%	8 772 116
Urban-Town	1 155 577	34.17%	1 499 663
Rural Town	11 764 914	65.00%	13 728 935
Rural (sparse)	341 410	36.00%	409 610
<b>Total</b>	<b>38 968 331</b>	<b>75.28%</b>	<b>43 058 676</b>

The establishment of Service Centres at the 67 proposed locations could potentially reduce travel distances in all provinces and the different types of settlements. The average travel distance to a Service Centre could be reduced from 16 km to 12.9 km

nationally, with the greatest improvements occurring in Free State (reduction of 8.1 km), followed by North West Province (reduction of 7 km) and Northern Cape (reduction of 6.8 km). The greatest reduction would be in urban towns, rural and sparsely populated areas.

## **CONCLUSION**

Government's legislative and policy frameworks require that spatial planning and the location of service delivery points bring together interventions from different sectors in a way that maximises access to public services and organisational productivity for the benefit of citizens. The optimal geographic distribution of TSCs (and government service delivery points) as indicated in this study can bring about this required improvements in citizen access as well as efficiency and effectiveness (productivity) in service delivery.

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